

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -  
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules  
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202  
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,  
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,  
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In promoting its supposed goals of fair competition, diversity and local voice in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of the huge, dominant companies and players in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate, or even attempt to demonstrate, the negative effects that media deregulation and consolidation have had on the diversity of our media. While there may indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented has been severely limited.

The right to conduct an informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was renewed in the marketplace of diverse ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge and consolidate further, our ability to have an open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised. The costs to run an independently-owned media outlet would be too prohibitive for any individual to sustain; therefore, the voices of the majority would effectively be either drowned out or silenced by the overpoweringly totalitarian, anti-democratic forces of corporate America.

It's unpatriotic and anti-American for the government, particularly an agency charged with preventing media monopolies to push for such wanton media deregulation which will inevitably result in monopolies--a direct threat to our freedom and democracy themselves, especially since you're using the excuse that Internet access has made broadcast regulations "obsolete." Nothing is further from the truth. A large number of Americans, almost half the people, are still denied access to the Internet through no fault of their own. So the pro-deregulation argument doesn't hold water.

I urge the FCC to preserve the public interest--and democracy itself--by not only keeping the media ownership rules in question intact, but also by considering imposing even tighter restrictions on how much one company can own of any one media outlet, including breaking up existing mergers, disallowing corporate ownership of the media, and requiring cable and/or satellite providers to provide public access channels with rates on a sliding scale commensurate to one's income.

Also, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February of 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to

hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public. The rarified, lawyerly atmosphere of an FCC rulemaking is not an appropriate decision-making venue when questions as profound as the freedom of our media are at stake. I encourage the Commissioners to come out and meet some of the people who do not have a financial interest in this issue, but a social interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is important that the Commission take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Sue Bazy